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Proclamation 7475—National Domestic Violence Awareness Month, 2001

October 1, 2001

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

The social blight of domestic violence has continued to burden America into the 21st Century. Our homes should be places of safety and comfort. Tragically, domestic violence can and does turn many homes into places of torment. The grim facts speak for themselves: almost one-third of American women murdered each year are killed by their current or former partners, usually a husband. Approximately 1 million women annually report being stalked. And many children suffer or witness abuse in their homes, which can sadly spawn legacies of violence in families across America.

Domestic violence spills over into schools and places of work; and it affects people from every walk of life. Though abuse may occur in the seclusion of a private residence, its effects scar the face of our Nation.

In the United States, we have strict laws intended to hold domestic abusers accountable for their vile conduct by bringing them to justice, but laws alone are not enough. A comprehensive, coordinated approach must shape our strategy to reduce domestic violence. Accordingly, the Federal Government is partnering with States, local communities, and other entities to implement tough and effective mechanisms to respond to reports of domestic violence.

These efforts include specialized units in police departments, and prosecutors offices that work with local victims' advocates to make the criminal justice system more responsive to victims and more retributive to their abusers. Jurisdictions throughout the country now provide legal assistance to ensure that when victims try to escape abuse,

they can obtain legal help from attorneys who understand the dynamics of domestic violence. Law enforcement officers, prosecutors, court personnel, and service providers are working to improve their responses to the often hidden victims of elder abuse and violence against women with disabilities. Moreover, thousands of communities now have shelters and emergency services for abused women and their children.

As a Nation, we must prioritize addressing the problem of domestic violence in our communities every day of the year. National Domestic Violence Awareness Month provides us with a special opportunity to emphasize that domestic violence is a crime, to warn abusers that they will be prosecuted, and to offer victims more aid and support. We can and must radically reduce and work to eliminate this scourge from our land. To succeed, this effort must be echoed by officials from every segment of the criminal justice system, Federal, State, and local. Community leaders, health care professionals, teachers, employers, friends, and neighbors all will play an important role in eradicating domestic violence.

As we observe National Domestic Violence Awareness Month, I call on all Americans to commit to preventing domestic violence and to assist those who suffer from it. These collective efforts will contribute to peace in our homes, schools, places of work, and communities and will help ensure the future safety of countless children and adults.

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim October 2001, as National Domestic Violence Awareness Month. I urge all Americans to learn more about this terrible problem and to take positive action in protecting communities and families from its devastating effects.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this first day of October, in the year of our Lord two thousand one, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-sixth.

George W. Bush

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Remarks Following a Meeting With Congressional Leaders and an Exchange With Reporters

October 2, 2001

The President. I want to thank the leaders of the Congress for coming down for breakfast this morning. We had a really good discussion, starting with the progress we're making on the war against terrorism. I briefed the Members about the fact that we're beginning to make progress in freezing assets—freezing assets of the Al Qaida organization. I also talked about that the net we're casting is wide and strong, that we've put together an international coalition that is impressive, and that the members of that coalition are staying steady.

It is my desire to make sure that as this war unfolds, that the leaders of both the Senate and the House are fully informed of what the Government is doing. I can't think of a better way to conduct foreign policy than to consult regularly with the leadership.

We also talked about airport security. I told the Members that I'm going to be going to Reagan Airport today to announce its opening, and that we need to work together to make sure that the package that's evolving in the House and the Senate is put together pretty quickly.

We talked about economic stimulus. There is agreement that we've got to come together with a vision about how big the package ought to be, to make sure that we affect the economy in the short run in a positive way, but don't affect it in the long run in a negative way.

We agree on principles, that we've got to make sure that demand for U.S. products stays strong, demand for products throughout our economy stays strong. Therefore, we talked about ways to stimulate demand. We understand that investment has fallen off in the corporate sector, and we talked about

constructive ways to stimulate investments so that the manufacturing sector, for example, of the United States has got some added wind in order to grow, to make sure that people find work. We talked about worker displacement. And we had a good discussion.

And there's one thing that the American people must understand: that as we work through these important subjects, we will do so in a spirit of cooperation and consultation.

And finally, all of us want to get a budget done as quickly possible, get the appropriations process done. We're making very good progress on coming up with the size of the ultimate budget. And once that's decided, we pledged to work together to get the appropriations bills moving as quickly as possible. That would be a welcome relief from the old budget battles of the past.

And I'm most pleased with the conversations we've had. I admired all four leaders prior to September 11th; I admire them even more after September 11th, because they're dedicated patriots, anxious to bring our Government together to make sure that we respond to the American people in a positive way.

I'll answer a couple questions.

Situation in the Middle East/Taliban

Q. Mr. President, is the time running out on the Taliban regime? Are you prepared, sir, to recognize a Palestinian state as a part of a broader Middle East peace process, itself?

The President. Those are two questions, Major [Major Garrett, Cable News Network].

Q. It's been a while since I've seen you.

The President. Don't take it personally.

Q. I never do, sir.

The President. The idea of a Palestinian state has always been a part of a vision, so long as the right to Israel to exist is respected.

But first things first, when it comes to the Middle East, and we've got to get to Mitchell, the Mitchell accord. Senator Mitchell put together a viable blueprint that most of the world agrees with as the necessary path to ultimately solving the problems of the Middle East. And we are working diligently with